United Nations E/CN.7/2016/NGO/2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 March 2016

English only

Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Fifty-ninth session
Vienna, 14-22 March 2016
Agenda Item 9
Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

Written statement submitted by EURAD

The Secretary-General has received the following paper, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

V.16-01761 (E) 220316 230316

Please recycle

EURAD Written Statement, 59th Commission of Narcotic Drugs, 2016, Vienna*

EURAD is an ECOSOC registered NGO, of over 50 grassroots organizations who deliver drug prevention, treatment, recovery, alternative sentencing and rehabilitation programmes across Europe and beyond.

In advance of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on drugs, we would like to take the opportunity to deliver some feedback and recommendations for the final outcome document.

The comments below refer to the version, as of 25th February 2016.

1. General Commentary on the UNGASS Outcome Document

A. EURAD welcomes the description of the world drug problem as a common and shared responsibility[1] and the continued support for the United Nations Drug Conventions and the relevant United Nations bodies as the cornerstones of global drug control system.[2] We are pleased to see the goals of health, safety and well-being[3] highlighted in the document along with a recognition that human beings should be placed at the centre of drug policies[4] and that drug policy should be in full conformity with human rights and international law.[5]

B. We welcome the holistic approach to the global drug problem reflected in the draft document. We were particularly pleased to see due reference to the underlying social and economic causes of the world drug problem,[6] which has been backed up by clear operational recommendations related to prevention,[7] drug-related crime[8] and alternative development.[9]

C. We welcome the new additions that have been made to outcome document, in respect of the needs of women, children and young people, including the need to mainstream gender and age-perspectives in programmes related to drug issues.[10]

D. We strongly agree with the emphasis on prevention in the draft document. We are happy to see a broad perspective on prevention that covers protection from illicit drug use and information about risks, but also an emphasis on life skills, parents and family environments, access to recreational activities and opportunities for education and vocational training.[11]

---

* The present statement is reproduced in the form in which it was received.
All references are to the DRAFT OUTCOME DOCUMENT UNGASS 2016 (REVISED 25TH FEBRUARY 2016)

[1] Paragraph 6.
[2] Paragraph 8 and 16.
[3] Paragraph 3 and 25 a.
[4] Paragraph 11.
[5] Paragraph 7.
[6] Paragraph 20.
[7] Paragraph 22 a.
[8] Paragraph 24 a.
[9] Paragraph 28 b.
[10] Paragraph 12.
[11] Paragraph 22 a and d.

E. We support the aim of promoting "a society free of drug abuse"[12] as the desired outcome of drug policies and programmes. Similarly ambitious visions can be seen in other areas, such as in the fields of HIV/AIDS, tobacco related illnesses and obesity.[13]

F. We are pleased that the latest outcome document recognises drug dependence as a treatable multi-factorial health disorder that should be addressed with evidence-based treatment, care and rehabilitation.[14] We welcome the commitment to ensure non-discriminatory access to a wide range of interventions as weli as to aftercare, rehabilitation, recovery and social integration.[15]

G. We are pleased to see that the latest outcome document recognises the role of recovered users in the development and implementation of wider drug prevention programmes, in reducing stigma and encouraging treatment seeking.[16] However, support and training may be required to fully release this potential.

H. We welcome the references to the Sustainable Development Goals in the draft document[17] and the recognition of the complementary and mutually reinforcing goals of global drug policy and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I. We welcome the chapter on alternative development in the draft outcome document, and we are particularly happy to see a broad understanding of development that emphasises inclusive economic growth, strengthening the rule of law and institutional frameworks, improved infrastructure and access to global trade markets.[18] We strongly support the recommendation that the success of alternative development programmes should be measured by wider human development indicators, rather than just crop eradication.[19]

J. We strongly support the inclusion in the latest draft that civil society entities should be "enabled to play a participatory role in the development and implementation of drug policies and programmes.[20]

2. Areas of Potential Improvement in the UNGASS Outcome Document

In regard to the revised outcome document, as of 25th February 2016, we would like to make the following suggestions:

A. EURAD welcomes a stronger emphasis on health in global drug policy. Despite some improvements, a majority of the world's population does not have access to essential medicines. We would like to see a strong role for the World Health Organization in the area of access to essential medicines.

B. Whilst we are extremely supportive and pleased with the inclusion of alternative[21] and proportionate sentencing for drug-related offences. However, we

[12] Paragraph 4.
[13] Reference to the "Getting to Zero" target in HIV/AIDS and the 2025 WHO target of no increase in obesity beyond 2010 levels.
[14] Paragraph 22 f.
[15] Paragraph 22 h.
[16] Paragraph 22 c and g.
[17] Paragraphs 10, 27 d, 28 c and e.
[18] Paragraph 28b.
[19] Paragraph 28e.
[20] Paragraph 18.

remain concerned that the use of the death penalty for drug-related offences is not addressed in the draft outcome document.

C. We would like to see a reference to the needs and role of parents, families and significant others of people who use drugs in treatment, rehabilitation and recovery.

D. We strongly welcome the focus on alternative development in the current draft. However, we are concerned about the reduction in funding for alternative development in recent years, and would like to see the good recommendations backed up by expertise and financial support.

E. The categorisation of prevention programmes in Point 22b could be improved with reference to the specific role of universal, environmental, selective and indicated prevention programmes.

F. Strengthening the reference to the Convention of the Rights of the Child by changing the final sentence of Point 25c to "and, as State Parties, reiterate our commitment to protect children from illicit drug use by fully implementing the obligations stemming from Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child".

G. We are concerned with the legalisation of recreational and medical use of cannabis in several jurisdictions and encourage Member States to ensure conformity with the United Nations Drug Conventions.

H. We are concerned with the many qualifications and reservations in the draft document. For instance, the draft document notes that State Parties should "consider providing information"[22] on several topics instead of committing to do so. We would like to see measurable and tangible outcomes from UNGASS 2016, however, we are worried that the text will be further diluted in the final states of the negotiations.

3. Our Role in the UNGASS 2016 Process and Civil Society Task Force

EURAD has been a representative of Western Europe in the Civil Society Task Force. We have supported the development of the Civil Society Global Survey and have organized three regional civil society consultation events, which were hosted in Brussels and Oslo.

Throughout our consultations, we consulted with 214 individuals, representing 181 different organizations and 35 different countries. We would like to thank Actis, Norway and Dianova International for their assistance in the sponsorship of the consultation events which made them possible. The consultation reports are available for download from the www.ungass2016.org website.

---

[21] Paragraphs 25g and 25i.

[22] Paragraphs 25e and 25h.